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A MUSICAL PILGRIMAGE. (From the "Daily Telegraph.")

Bayreuth, Aug. 2.

After six years, I am again resting—no, not exactly resting—beneath the shadow of Richard Wagner's *Wohnhaus*, and within an easy march, along a road less dusty now than I have known it, of his Festival Theatre. The musical pilgrim, whatever his creed and favourite shrine, must needs set his face towards Bayreuth at the present moment. Curiosity, if nothing else, draws him thither, or, it may be, hope of cause for the good, hearty anathema which, despite a familiar Latin quotation, continues to relieve even celestial minds. Whatever the feeling in my own case, it must be a strong one, since my recollections of Bayreuth in 1876 are not among those that I occasionally "scour," as do the Berkshire folk their White Horse, in order to keep the outline clear. I would fain forget the hunger and the heat, the worry and the work of a time when "all the world," in the French sense of the expression, descended upon a quiet, sleepy, out-of-the-way Bavarian town, and found a bovine population utterly unable to supply its wants. Yet, I left London the other day prepared to go through the ordeal again—though, let me confess, scarcely expectant of having to do so. "Why not expectant?" may be the query of some simple believer in what he reads of the march of Wagnerism. I admit the propriety of the question from his point of view. Six years have passed since the *Nibelung's Ring* was produced, and in the interval there has been much beating-up for Wagnerian recruits throughout all regions of the musical world. Take London, for example. We have scarcely got the thud of the Wagnerian drum out of our ears, and our minds are yet exercised by the harangues of here and there a Sergeant Kite. All things considered, an astonishing example of centripetal force should just now be presented at Bayreuth, wherefore our simple believer was quite justified in interrupting me with his question. But deductions and facts do not always coincide here; indeed, they are at exceeding variance. On my way to this place I found the minds of men remarkably free from pre-occupation regarding Wagner and his new work; nor was the name of *Parsifal* mentioned in my hearing till I encountered a German journalist at Bamberg, and he, having sworn by Beethoven and *Fidelio*, vowed eternal brotherhood with myself as a fellow-believer. *Apropos*, let me say that musical practices sufficiently unsatisfactory seemed to have established themselves along the road. While waiting for the train at Cologne I did not lounge with grooms and porters on the bridge, but, as most others, strolled into the adjacent cathedral—that marvellous monument which a thousand years have not finished, the noise of mallet and chisel breaking in even now upon chant and prayer. Some kind of service, I know not what, was going on; the priests were singing, and the organ accompanying. Let me never hear such cacophony again. The reverend fathers insisted upon a *tempo rubato* of the freest kind. The poor organist, high up in a gallery round a corner, had to guess at what was being done in front of the altar; and the recurring note upon which an indefinite pause came was one that half the voices failed to reach. But when the boys struck in, I was driven to think of some wounded creature in agony, since nothing more harsh and painful could be conceived. Such a service would not be tolerated for a week in an English cathedral—our "unmusical nation" having still an old-fashioned love of that which pleases the ear. I waited for the train again in the fine old city of Wurzburg, found the place *en fête*, and the cathedral crowded by assistants at some special religious function. Far out along the Dom Strasse came the sound of many voices, assuring me an opportunity of hearing the German *chorale* in a place where its traditions have certainly been preserved. If such a chance is never more mine I shall not grieve. The singing was congregational, no doubt. Every man, woman, and child joined in a mighty unison, the only fault being that the vocal pitch fell in each verse at least a semitone below that of the organ. Not a bit did this trouble the good people, they went serenely on their way, having apparently no ears to hear that which drove at least one person out of the place. A little later, the same congregation descended into the streets, ac-

companying with pious hymns the Host, as it was borne along under a gorgeous canopy. Curious results were produced by this itinerant and open-air song, inasmuch as the procession divided itself into sections, each singing in its own time and key. Thus was heard, for example, a melody progressing simultaneously in the keys of D and G, while, to fill up the gap, a brass band blared forth the tune in F. The remarkable thing was that the people sang on, undisturbed by the extraordinary clash of sounds; and now I do not wonder that Germany provides Wagnerian vocalists, to whom it is a matter of perfect indifference what goes on in the Wagnerian orchestra.

Bavarian trains, not excepting those humorously called "schnell," move slowly, in accord with the habits of the people, and from Wurzburg to Bayreuth was a weary journey, timed to end in the small hours of the morning. Anxiety about a lodging, however, did not survive the halt at Bamberg. The guard of the train effected a little business in the way of touting for particular hotels, and the refreshment people at the stations attempted more. Clearly, Bayreuth in 1882 was not as Bayreuth in 1876, and so I found it. What a contrast the town presented on the following dark and dreary morning to its gay and lightsome aspect during the sunny days of the "Nibelung's Ring!" Then Bayreuth put on its best and bravest; "flagged" its houses in a style that would rejoice the Mayor of Windsor's heart what time a Royal marriage happens; stripped the neighbouring fir woods of their greenery, and made an astonishing display of paper flowers. Now, one may scour the place for a visible flag—even the Master's painted villa, "Wahnfried," stands under bare poles; the fir trees moan in the melancholy wind undisturbed; while not the semblance of a bud or bloom makes mock of the sombre scene. The streets are forsaken. Vainly one looks for the eager throngs of 1876, and the inhabitants stand at their doors expecting lodgers who never come. Thus but a few features in Bayreuth remind me of the "Nibelung" days. Accommodation is indifferent and food bad, as a matter of course. That supplies one connecting link, and another is the appearance—in diminished numbers, truly—of flapping head-gear, long hair, spectacled faces, and the mysterious look which has been happily described as gazing "intensely nowhere." These are signs of devotion to Wagnerian culture, and I always regard them with the interest due to genuine enthusiasm in our somewhat flabby days. Only, as it is sometimes my fate to sit at table near an enthusiast, I wish that Wagnerian culture included clean finger-nails, and forbade using the knife where, as a rule, we "Philistines" make the fork serve. That, however, is a detail.

Another bond of union between the time present and the time six years past may be observed in the shop windows, which again remind lookers-on that they are in the vicinity of a shrine. Bayreuth appears to assume that every visitor will take home with him an effigy of the Master. You can have the Master in various sorts of base metal; he is to be purchased, medallion or bust, in plaster; and it would be quite easy to obtain him in marble, with, perhaps, the real laurel-wreath thrown in that now adorns his brow. Photography is prodigal of the Master and all his belongings. It showers him upon us in unnumbered styles and positions, enables us to penetrate the walls of "Wahnfried," and even to peep into the laboratory where the wizard, in wonderful attire, weaves his spells and compounds his nostrums. Nor is this all, by much. You can wear *Parsifal* shawls, and put round your neck a *Kundry* cravat, while as for Wagnerian books it would be possible to fill with them an ordinary library. All the Master's *littérateurs*, from Hans von Wolzogen downwards, have fastened upon *Parsifal*. One can fancy how they waited, pen in hand, for this new utterance of their oracle; some to expound the enigmatical; others to follow the trace of the finished work back to its primitive sources; others to analyse and classify; others to do the safer and less troublesome trumpeting. Truly, if we do not understand Wagner, it can hardly be for lack of interpreters, and the only question that arises is whether a composer should need such a jabber of explanatory tongues. Admitting this question as pertinent, a philanthropic mind can discover consolation in the fact that Wagner gives a good deal of employment. He has

created not only a "new art" but a new industry, and "Wagner-expounder" should have a distinct place in the directory under the head "Trades and professions."

After what I have said regarding the Festival town it will surprise no one to learn that yesterday morning I had a choice of places in the Festival theatre. An obliging ticket clerk made various graceful curves with his pencil upon the plan, and intimated that all seats within their scope were at my disposal. This, it should be remembered, was for only the second public performance, the first representations having been restricted to those faithful disciples who deserved a place at the Master's table, instead of hanging about to pick up fallen crumbs. Altogether I concluded that there was no great run upon the crumbs, and the fact turned out to be even so, the sides of the theatre presenting last night a disquieting array of empty benches. We were a melancholy band as we wended along the well-remembered road leading to the scene of operations. Overhead, dense clouds promised another downpour to deepen the mud under foot, and they kept their word; across the reeking country blew a dank and moaning wind; there was a chill around everything, and a depression that seemed to creep into the soul through the channel of each sense. I did not then realize to the fullest extent the fitness of this as prelude to one of the most painful dramas ever put upon the stage; but I estimated completely the characteristic course pursued by Herr Wagner in making access to his temple an almost certain matter of discomfort and difficulty. He doubtless had his reasons, and may have recognized a personal triumph last night, as between the acts he saw damp devotees and the rest trying to cheer themselves with Bavarian beer and Bayreuthian victuals. Wagner was present, of course, and had a seat in the Princes' Gallery—not a conspicuous seat, nor one altogether obscure, for the audience soon found him out, and turned upon him the admiring glare of a thousand spectacles. This personal homage became more demonstrative after the second act. There were loud shouts of "Hoch" and "Bravo" till the Master, who is never more than prudently coy on such occasions, came to the front of his box, and amid dead silence spoke a few words which, to the majority present, were inaudible. By his side was the ever faithful Liszt, looking much aged since 1876, but no less picturesque and striking than of yore; while around him fluttered a bevy of fair young women eager for a smile or a word. So far, certainly, the great virtuoso was Parsifal in Klingsor's "rose-garden of girls," and, after his courtly fashion, may have said, with that hero, "I've seen nowhere yet beings so bright." The performance was attended by the usual Wagnerian conditions—semi-darkness and complete silence in the auditorium. Hardly a sound disturbed the music; no one came in late, and no one departed early. More than this, after the first act, which closes with an observance of the Lord's Supper by the Knights of the Holy Grail, all rose and left the theatre as silently as though the place were a church, the only sounds heard being those of imperfectly suppressed emotion. Every true lover of lyric drama must rejoice in such demonstrations of a thoroughly earnest, artistic spirit. Here we rise above the conflict of schools and the clash of opposing convictions into a serener region, like the peaceful woods around the Castle of the Grail, where no weapon was ever drawn, and there we are all of one mind in desiring that the magnificent form of art known as opera might as a form of art be regarded, and not as a frivolous function, whose divinity is a *prima donna*, and whose end is pastime. The performance of *Parsifal*, generally speaking, was very excellent, the only serious drawbacks being such as were almost inevitable under the conditions imposed by Wagner. On this matter, however, remark will be more opportunely made when I come to consider the work itself. Let me now pay a deserved tribute to the highly artistic labours of Fräulein Brandt (Kundry) and Herr Hill (Klingsor)—both well known in London, and also to the admirable services of Herr Reichmann (Amfortas) and Herr Sehr (Gurnemanz). The orchestra, if not quite up to the standard of that in 1876, fell very little short of it, while the chorus, which had to sing under unusual difficulties, only failed where censure could be unjust. But no

merit in execution can change the nature of *Parsifal*, which nature is painful indeed; not least so in that the noble lesson of the story is degraded by circumstances, some of which are unworthy as they are gratuitous, while others approach dangerously near to downright blasphemy, if it be blasphemy to caricature sacred things.

Aug. 4.

After Richard Wagner had written *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, and when contemplating *The Nibelung's Ring*, a discovery was announced in the pages of *Opera and Drama*. "The primitive myth," said, in effect, the author of that remarkable work, "shows us the ideal man—the purely human, free from all conventionality, whereas the Christian myth is but an adulteration, the consequence of a re-action against the religious influence which sought to annihilate the myth entirely." Wagner was, thereupon, understood by superficial judges of his character to have wholly set aside the Christian myth, this opinion being afterwards supported by the production of *The Nibelung's Ring* and *Tristan and Isolde* in a Pagan form. But when the Bayreuth master declares himself in one sense, it may be expected that he will sooner or later act in another. He is like the "untutored African," who sacrifices to his idol one day, and flogs it the next. Not a few examples were cited in these columns *à propos* to the recent London production of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, but the climax has been reached in *Parsifal*, which, taken from a Christian myth, is made more Christian than its source. I do not say this by way of censure. Inconsistency is worthy of praise when it implies the abandonment of false principles. At the same time, Wagner's "backing and filling" scarcely become the founder of a new faith. He compromises his advocates by it, and makes them doubtful what to preach. I may be told not to trouble myself, since I am not his advocate. But his opponents are also vexed. They shoot their arrows from afar against mistaken teaching, and before the missile can reach its mark the target has turned over and presents a friendly face.

To understand aright the legend of *Parsifal*, it becomes necessary to go behind Wagner and look at the myth as presented by Wolfram of Eschenbach, from whose thirteenth-century poem, *Parsifal and Titirel*, the Bayreuth master has avowedly taken most of his materials. It is said that Wagner consulted also Christian of Troyes and the *Mort d'Arthur*, but so far into details I need not enter, Wolfram's mystical work answering every necessary purpose. First, however, concerning the Holy Grail, which plays so conspicuous a part in both myth and drama.

As Lucifer fell from Heaven a jasper dropped out of his crown, was caught by angels, and supported in the air till Christ appeared, when it descended to the earth, and, in the form of a cup, came into the possession of Joseph of Arimathea. The cup was not only used at the institution of the Last Supper, but in it Joseph caught the blood which flowed from the Saviour's wounded side. Thenceforth it became sacred, and had the power of sustaining life. According to one tradition, no man, after the death of Christ, was found worthy to possess the holy vessel, which returned to the custody of angels, till Titirel, the son of a French king, obtained the honour by reason of humility and purity. Under divine direction Titirel built a temple for the Grail and a castle for its guardians, on Montsalvat in Biscay, and there founded an order of knights, who for their chivalry and chastity were deemed fit to protect and be sustained by the miraculous cup. Around the castle were woods impenetrable to all save those in the service of the Grail. The story of *Parcival* opens after Titirel, become old, has resigned the Grail Kingship into the hands of his son, Amfortas. According to Wolfram, *Parcival's* father was a knight-errant named Gamuhret, who died in Arabia before the boy was born. His mother, Herzeleide, thinking to keep him to herself, brought him up in a forest, quite apart from the world of men. But one day, seeing some knights in armour, the lad determined to go to King Arthur's court, and be made a knight likewise. Then, his mother, to discourage him, by buffeting and mocking, dressed him as a fool, and sent him forth on a sorry jade. After many adventures *Parcival*

became a knight-errant, and, as he wandered about, happened on a splendid castle, where he was ushered into a great hall, and saw the lord of the place sitting in a chair, weak and ill. Presently a man entered bearing a bloody spear, which he carried round the hall, and after him came virgins with a table and two silver knives, followed by a queen, in whose hands was a lustrous cup. Thereupon the attendant knights sat down and ate, whatever they desired being furnished by the cup. Percival was astonished at all this, but, having once been warned against inquisitiveness by an old knight named Gurnemanz, he asked no questions, and soon took his departure, meeting, on the way, his foster-sister Ligune, who informed him that the castle was the stronghold of the Grail, that the sick man was King Amfortas, and that he who asked the King about his illness, the bloody spear, and so on, would for ever be rich and blessed. Kundry, a learned woman, servant of the Grail, having told him to the same effect, Percival waxed angry with himself and with Providence on account of the lost opportunity. He reviled God and became desperate, yet longing ever to see the Grail again. At last he met with his uncle, Trevrezent, once a Grail Knight, now a recluse, and from him learned that Amfortas had received a wound in combat for the honour of a lady whom, against the laws of the Grail, he was weak enough to love. That wound nothing could heal, nor could anything give relief, save the head of the spear which had caused it. Only when a knight accidentally came and asked about the hurt would Amfortas be whole again, but to that knight he must then resign his crown. Such a Knight, said Trevrezent, had once appeared, but he kept silence. Percival stayed long with his uncle, receiving instruction and rising into a higher and better life; after which he again set forth in search of the Grail. Five years went by, and he found it not. Then Kundry came to him once more with the news that he had been divinely appointed the Grail lord. With her he set out, entered the castle, healed Amfortas, and succeeded him on the throne.

Thus Wolfram of Eschenbach, whose allegory—such the poem of *Titarel and Percival* is—amply deserves consideration for itself alone. But the *Parsifal* of Wagner awaits notice, and a comparison readily shows in what spirit its author approached his work. The new Bayreuth drama is one of "sensation" from first to last. It could be nothing else with chance of success; for the course that Wagner has taken admits of no going back. He must astonish more and more, or meet the fate described by himself as the fate of Berlioz, and lie "irretrievably buried beneath the ruins of his own machines." In *Parsifal* Wagner is equal to this position; but at what price has a sensational success been gained? Let the reader answer who perseveres to the end of my letter.

Day breaks in the forest around Montsalvat, and finds old Gurnemanz and two young esquires asleep under a tree. It is not clear why they choose a bed on the ground, but before they wake let me say that Wagner has made Wolfram's Gurnemanz a Knight of the Grail, and presently gives him the functions discharged in the poem by the recluse, Trevrezent. He has made him, also, an extremely garrulous person—the Wotan of the drama in the matter of long stories. The sleepers having risen, two knights enter and talk with Gurnemanz about the King's incurable wound. They are followed by Kundry, whom Wagner has transformed from a mere messenger and servant of the Grail into one of the most extraordinary and complex characters ever put upon a stage. At present she looks like a mediæval Meg Merrilies—wild, unkempt, and apparently vicious. But the woman is not vicious, only peculiar. She has been to Arabia after a balsam for the King's hurt, and, handing this to Gurnemanz, proceeds to roll about on the ground in a highly eccentric and somewhat indecorous fashion. The King, Amfortas, now enters, borne on a litter. He goes to assuage his pain by bathing in a lake close at hand, but stops to thank Kundry for procuring the balsam. That remarkable person answers, "No thanks! Ha, ha!" and resumes her writhing as the King is carried away. Now is the time for one of Gurnemanz's long stories. Defending Kundry from the harsh words of the esquires, the aged Knight hints that she is seeking shrift by Grail service for grave sins in the past. From this

he glides into the subject of Amfortas, telling how the King went out to fight with the magician Klingsor, carrying the sacred spear which had pierced the side of our Lord, how "a maid of fearful beauty" enticed him to her embraces, and how Klingsor, snatching the spear, gave him the incurable wound. In the magician's hands the holy weapon still remains. Gurnemanz then proceeds to sketch the history of the Grail, but we are chiefly concerned to know that Klingsor has raised a castle hard by, whose enchanted gardens are filled with beautiful women luring knights to destruction and to the shameful service of their master. Thus in time Klingsor hopes to obtain possession of the Grail. We are further told that, according to Divine intimation, Amfortas can only be healed by a pitying "guileless Fool." The long story ended, cries of alarm are heard and a wild swan falls dead upon the ground. Knights and esquires rush in horror-stricken, bringing with them a rudely-clad youth, whose bow and arrows proclaim him the murderer. The esquires demand his punishment, and Gurnemanz reproaches him for disturbing the peace of the sacred forest, working so upon his feelings that the culprit breaks his arrows on the spot. Questioned as to his name and parentage, the lad knows nothing, but Kundry, still writhing on the ground, knows all, and between her revelations and the youth's recollections, the story of Parsifal's birth and bringing up, as told by Wolfram, is substantially reproduced. From this Gurnemanz draws such conclusions that when Kundry, after painful nervous symptoms and interjectional remarks, has fallen asleep behind a bush, and Amfortas has been carried back to the castle, he invites the stranger to go with him and see the Grail. Parsifal accepts, and the two seem to walk through the forest, but really "mark time," as the scenery moves from left to right. The device is not unknown in England at Christmas time, and seems rather puerile in a serious work, especially when, as on Tuesday last, a hitch occurs, and the curtain has to be ignominiously lowered. However, thus they arrive at the castle and enter a large hall, under the dome of which tables are arranged in horseshoe form before a kind of raised altar. Here Parsifal stands in a corner and waits. Presently the Knights of the Grail, clad in blue, with blood-red mantles, slowly enter, singing as they come, and trains of youths and boys cross the stage. The knights take their places at the tables while the invisible boys and youths sing hymns referring to the sacrifice of Christ and the efficacy of His blood. Amfortas next appears on his litter, the Holy Grail carried in its shrine before him. Esquires also bear flagons for the wine and baskets for the bread. The Grail being on the altar and the King reclining behind it a mysterious voice issues from a niche. It is that of the old King, Titarel, who, though entombed, lives still by virtue of the Grail, and is impatient for its uncovering. Amfortas, on the other hand, dreads to see the sacred vessel. It causes him intolerable anguish, and renews the bleeding of his wound. Nevertheless, duty must be done. He gives the order; the esquires uncover the cup, and all kneel while the boys in the dome sing the words of the Saviour, "Take my body and eat," &c. As they chant the hall darkens, but the cup becomes radiant and seems filled with blood. Amfortas raises it above his head, then replaces it on the altar; its splendour fades, the hall is re-illuminated, and lo! the baskets are seen to contain bread and the flagons wine. A love-feast follows, to the solemn hymns of the concealed choir, and when it is ended the several processions retire as they came. Meanwhile, Parsifal has remained steadfastly gazing, only moving to clutch his heart as Amfortas cried out in the agony of the bleeding wound. Now comes a remarkable illustration of Wagner's Gothic fancy; a fancy of the kind which was wont, in mediæval times, to carve hideous monsters and fantastic horrors upon the walls of sacred places. Gurnemanz approaches Parsifal, and says, "Wist thou what thou saw'st?" Receiving for answer only a shake of the head, he opens a side door, and pushes the youth without, exclaiming, "Let then our swans for the future alone, and seek thyself, gander, a goose." Then the act ends, leaving us strangely moved by a solemnity that led up only to a frivolous, and under the circumstances almost ribald, attempt at humour.

I need hardly point out how Wagner has dealt in this act with his mythical materials. His aim was—always in the direction of sensationalism—to heighten the mysticism of the story, to give it a deeper religious significance, and to bring it into close connection with the form of sin which he has used so much, and, apparently, found to pay. For the heightened mysticism we have the spear that wounded Christ, not that of the Saracen with whom, according to Wolfram, Amfortas fought. For the deeper religious significance stands a ceremony that elevates the ordinary meal of the Grail knights into a celebration of the Eucharist, while the reference to Klingsor's seductive maidens, and the fault of Amfortas, foreshadows one of those lust-orgies without which a Wagner opera does not now seem to be complete. Adding to this the phenomenon of the entombed yet living Titelre, and the dark mystery of the wild woman, Kundry, we see a supreme illustration of Wagner's present tendencies. Can drama find a parallel to an act in which the characters are a king who in death is yet alive; another king who in life is as good as dead; a "pure Fool," and a woman to all appearance only fit for a madhouse? Touching the scene of the Supper, let me admit that Wagner treats it with much solemnity and beauty. He has, beyond dispute, risen to the occasion, and produced that which deeply impresses. No one, having looked on the moving spectacle, can ever forget it. The thing remains photographed on the brain—crystallized in the memory. A question, of course, arises whether the profoundest mysteries of religion should be made into a theatrical spectacle, but the point hardly admits of argument. It is a matter of feeling and taste as to which, I fancy, all English people are like minded. They, at any rate, will never admit *Parsifal* among them. Turning to the music of the act, Wagner is found still true to his theory of representative themes. There are no fewer than fourteen such *motives* in this part of the work, the more important being the "Love Feast," an archaic strain having in it a strong Gregorian element; the "Grail," which is simply the church theme used by Mendelssohn in his "Reformation" symphony; the "Faith," an extended and hymn-like melody, largely employed in the religious episodes; the "Amfortas," expressive of the wounded King's condition; the "Kundry," which, appropriately enough, is a sort of indiscriminate tumble down the chromatic scale; the "Parsifal," having a character of the chase, and suggesting the hero's forest origin and occupation; and the "Bell," a short subject of eight notes supposed to be played by the chimes of the Castle during the Grail ceremonial. Three of these are found in the orchestral introduction, which is simply a piece of musical patchwork intended to exhibit them. For an idea of the general treatment of themes and dialogue inquirers may be referred to almost any of Wagner's later operas, whose modes and mannerisms, dodges and devices, *Parsifal* faithfully reproduces. Indeed, it would seem that the master has nothing new to tell us; at any rate in this fashion. Knowing the *motives* and the story, it is easy to guess what the orchestra will be doing at a given moment, and, with interest thus discounted, the patchy, disjointed, flighty music, never in the same key or rhythm for many bars together, becomes singularly wearisome and unsatisfactory. Clever it is always, and at times singularly beautiful, but one has no time to admire before the kaleidoscope turns and another combination, probably offensive, invites notice. From this criticism, however, the music of the Supper scene must be exempt. Not that it is less Wagnerian than the rest. No other master could have written it. But here the verbal text, apart from the monologue of Amfortas, is almost entirely lyrical, and music properly becomes its end and aim. Moreover, it admits of broad and impressive treatment. In such circumstances Wagner is rarely or never found wanting. His peculiar genius expands when free from the trammels of an artificial theory, and appears in native majesty. Hence the Supper, with its processional music and sacred hymns, is a splendid artistic creation, before which criticism yields place to praise. Nothing in opera was ever more cunningly devised. The noble hall, with its radiant dome, the glowing, blood-red cup; the mantled knights; the King reclining at the altar-table in the attitude of his Lord;

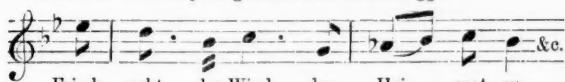
the choruses of the adoring devotees, now blending with, now detached from, the invisible choirs, whose voices fall from the height of the dome—all these make up a wonderful whole. No marvel that the spectators here let the curtain fall in silence, and tread softly as they retire. But this is only one scene; how as to the remaining acts? I shall answer the question in another letter.

(To be continued.)

WAGNER'S "PARSIFAL."—Impartial opinion with regard to the merits of this last *Bühnenweihfestspiel* can in no way be influenced by the *dicta* of "patrons" and uncompromising worshippers who enjoyed the inestimable privilege of witnessing the first two performances, in the house that Richard Wagner built upon a hill commanding the "City of the Margravine," and the residence of Jean Paul. As might have been expected, their verdict, loudly enunciated, is one of unanimous approval, and, if we adhere to the letter—not the spirit—of the word, unanimously enthusiastic. Happily, the "Second Bayreuthiad" is not destined for such barren results. It will find historiographers in critics and connoisseurs of more or less repute from foreign countries, who, debarred from the exclusively aristocratic manifestations with which that Bayreuthiad was inaugurated, may, like sturdy Plebeians, conscious of their social inferiority, take eager advantage of what is to follow. These, by the payment of thirty marks—ten marks less than the value of the "seal-ring of my grandfather," stolen from the pocket of Sir John Falstaff, while taking his ease at his inn—may have opportunity enough for testing the Patronic decision. *Parsifal* is to be given three times weekly up to the end of the current month; and it is well that it should be so, Wagner peremptorily opposing its being played anywhere outside Bayreuth. Thus, whoever desires to hear it, must travel to the small and by no means inviting Franconian town. True, the poet-musician, after the first Bayreuthiad, prohibited with equal sternness the reproduction of his complete Tetralogy elsewhere; but circumstances, to which even Wagner is as much a slave as the most uninitiated, altered his resolution, and the sympathetic Herr Neumann obtained leave to farm out the *Ring des Nibelungen* in its integrity, when, where, and however he might find it expedient. The issue is that Wagner grows rich on the profits derived from public representations of this erst forbidden masterpiece. Such also may be the destiny of *Parsifal*; in which case, freshly converted neophytes, trembling at the threshold of the temple, and shy catechumens, who, though anxious for admission, have not yet mastered the simple rudiments of Wagnerism, will stand some chance of making acquaintance with it nearer home. It requires a full purse and much leisure for amateurs living far off to undertake a pilgrimage to the Shrine—a fact which many of the Knights of the Round Table, who followed in the quest of the "Sancgreall" (as Malory sometimes spells the word), discovered to their cost. The plan and character of the drama, which Wagner has built out of materials derived from more than one version of the *Parsifal* (or as Wolfram von Eschenbach, the mediæval poet, styles it, *Perceval's* saga, have been frequently referred to. Its poetical distinction, notwithstanding violations of good taste that materially weaken the impression it might otherwise create, has been cheerfully recognized. On the other hand, its immoral tendency, as demonstrated in the second act, where the maiden virtue of the hero is exposed to so trying an ordeal, and the free use of ceremonies sacred to the Catholic Christian Church, employed for the purposes of theatrical effect, so as to fit in with the development of a fantastic and ridiculous legend, have been as frankly condemned. The scene in the last act, where Kundry, Magdalen-like, washes Parsifal's feet, and dries them with her hair (in return for which Parsifal baptizes her), and the Sacramental feast in the scene following, out-Wagners Wagner himself, who seems to regard all themes, sacred or secular, as his rightful prerogative, when he has a mind to appropriate them. These passages, however, are insurmountable obstacles to the production of his last dramatic work—his *magnum opus*, as it is already pronounced by fanatical advocates *quand même*—from ever being heard in England, which, while causing regret to some, will afford unqualified satisfaction to the many who would not willingly see music deprived of its legitimate position as an independent art, and formlessness substituted for form. The first public representation of *Parsifal* took place on Tuesday, when they with wistful eyes and parched ears, until now outside the Temple, after long draughts from the Wagnerianly-shaped "hanap," doubtless adjudged the work on its merits, and will make their impressions generally known. Until then we reserve future remarks. The vocal score of the new opera-drama is published, and he who runs may "rede."—*Graphic*, Aug. 5.

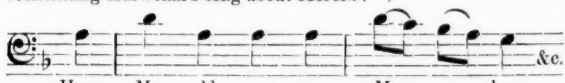
TO SAGRAMORE.

DEAR SAG.—Teach your grandmother to suck eggs.



Frisch weht der Wind der Hei-mat zu.

After the second performance of *Tristan und Isolde* (as F. C. B. has it) "He sold her," this same tune (Wagner is famous for sailor's tunes*) was running in my head for hours, so that I could not sleep. Luckily, I had my "fretful" close by, and (happy thought) with much effort succeeded in brushing it out. But before I tried again to sleep the tune came back, with its unclean harmony on the dominant pedal of E flat, and this I could not drive away, however desperately I used my "fretful." There was no alternative but to get up, have a plunge, and take a walk. Near Hampstead Heath I spied Herr Grubemann, who, with half-uttered maledictions, was, in spite of himself, vociferating Kurwenal's song about Morold:—†



Herr Morold zog zu Mee-re her.

"I can't," said Herr Grubemann, "get rid of this infernal tune. Will you help me?" I knew the "fretful" would be useless, so we took off our hats, and made these "Leit-motives" sound together as a two-part song, at which, one of these days, you shall look and wonder. Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs—at any rate by the mere interchanging of keys; pronounce Gawaine, Gāwaine; and believe me, old 'oss, your always attached and loving

DODINAS.

P.S.—I write this hoving under an oak, having been smitten down of a Cornish knight, by name Tristram, who had the temerity to encounter me in the open meadow with sharp spears, and the insolence (for a Cornishman) to come best out of the encounter.

—o—

PROFESSOR WYLDE ON THE TONIC SOL-FA SYSTEM.

In reply to remarks made by Mr Curwen at the June meeting of the Tonic Sol-fa Institution in Exeter Hall, as well as to an article headed "Dr Wylde on Musical Systems," which appeared last month in the *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, the Gresham Professor has written the following letter to the editor of that journal. A better illustration of a "Roland for an Oliver" could scarcely be desired:—

"Sir,—My attention has been called to the June number of your paper, and the report of a speech of yours at Exeter Hall, in which you make a volume of my Gresham lectures the subject of certain remarks, which I claim the privilege of answering through the columns of the journal in which those remarks appear. In respect to my quotation of Sir John Herschel's opinion on the Tonic Sol-fa system, you attribute to me the words, 'This Tonic Sol-fa system is the greatest retrograde step ever taken.' Permit me to say you misquote me by omitting the two words 'this practice,' which precedes the sentence. As Sir John Herschel's opinions are sufficiently well-known, I deemed it unnecessary to publish his language *in extenso*. My allusion referred to the innovations which he strongly deprecated upon what he called 'the good old system of representing by Do, Re, Mi, &c.—the scale of natural notes in any key whatever,' &c., &c. Now when you accuse me of perverting Sir John Herschel's opinions concerning the Tonic Sol-fa system you forget that the present mode in which it is taught is not the system that Sir John Herschel endorsed. In Mr John Curwen's *Tonic Sol-fa Primer*, page 12, he acknowledges that the mode of teaching, in a certain instance there illustrated, departs from the true Tonic principle, that is to say, when 'the change of key is short,' and he defends the departure on the ground that it is 'for the convenience of the singers.' If compromises of this character are to be made whenever 'the convenience of the singers' seems to demand it, the sooner you cease to use Sir John Herschel's name as the advocate of your system the better.

"I do not propose in this place to reiterate the arguments adduced in my lectures, complain of you for defending the system which it is your interest to maintain, nor enter into any further analysis concerning it, but I do protest against your appropriating the eulogies of a great authority to sanction that system, when it has been per-

* The *Fliegende Holländer*, to wit.—Dr Bridge.

† The Marhaus of Sir Thomas Malory, who, with deference to Herr Ritter von Beattie and Sir Clement Scott, was never Isolde's lover, but always her mother's brother.—Dr Bridge.

verted from the simplicity of the very principle for which he commended it. That the disregard of the 'Tonic principle' lays Mr Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa system open to criticism in more directions than one, when judged by the rules of science, may be affirmed by reference to page 54, part 2, of Mr John Curwen's *Standard Course of Lessons and Exercises*; there the notation, at the commencement of the sixth bar, indicates that the interval of the fourth, between the tenor and alto parts, should be that which occurs between *la* and *re*, whereas, according to true Tonic principles, it should indicate that interval of a fourth which occurs between *sol* and *do*. Sir John Herschel shows that the difference between the two kinds of 'fourths' amounts to the value of a comma.

"In this instance again I must remark that so long as Mr Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa system ignores this difference, he has no right to claim Sir John Herschel as its champion; whilst I have a perfect right to infer that the eminent musical mathematician intended his reproof, 'the greatest retrograde step ever taken,' &c., to apply to Mr John Curwen, and all departures from 'the good old system.'

"As to the 'state of muddle' which you are pleased to attribute to me because I call the Tonic Sol-fa system that of 'fixed syllables,' I beg to say the 'muddle' is all on your own side, and belongs to your own treatment of the system in question. Whilst the syllable *do* is representative of the key-note or tonic of any key, the succession of syllables that follow it are *fixed*, at any rate, they should be so, to conform to the method commended by Sir John Herschel, and if they are not, they come under that category of new departures 'for the convenience of the singers' which would make 'retrograde steps,' in the Tonic Sol-fa system, something more than a mere figure of speech. Meantime, the original Tonic Sol-fa system consists of a succession of 'fixed syllables' following the key-note, irrespective of pitch. In that sense I used the words, and shall continue to do so, even at the risk of violating the technical phraseology of the Tonic Sol-fa Institution.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"H. WYLDE."

HYMN.

(From an unpublished Cantata, entitled "Ethebert.")

Almighty God, sustained by Thee,
In grace alone we stand,
With confidence we nestle in
The hollow of Thy hand.
Though Hell should muster all its force,
Its power Thou wilt disarm;
Who dare dispute Thy sovereign sway?
Or stay Thy mighty arm?

O Christ, our Leader in the strife,
Our living, loving Head,
May we Thy glorious image bear,
And in Thy footsteps tread.
With consecrated noble deed
May we our lives adorn,
Prepared to brave the world's abuse,
Its malice and its scorn.

O Spirit of the Mighty God,
Thou blessed Heavenly Guest,
When wrestling with the storms of life,
Its turmoil and unrest,
Breathe o'er our hearts Thy deep, deep calm,
And grant that we may know
The heights and depths of love divine
With all Thy saints below.

WETSTAR.

BERLIN (Correspondence).—The alterations for the security of the public from fire are being actively carried out at the Royal Opera-house. Massive walls are being run up between the stage and the auditorium from the foundations to the roof, and there will be an iron curtain to close, if necessary, the proscenium opening.—The new Directory of the Royal School of Music is thus constituted:—Professor Joseph Joachim, chief of the instrumental section; Professor Kiel, chief of the composition section; Professor Ernst Rudorff, chief of the pianoforte section; and Professor Ad. Schulz, chief of the vocal section. Professor Spitta acts as general manager without belonging to any particular section.

MARRIAGE.

On August 5th, at St Matthew's Church, Bayswater, by the Rev. Henry Dening, ERNST AUGUSTUS STOEGER, of Dorset House, No. 16, Ledbury Road, Bayswater, to LOUISA B. S. LANE, grand-daughter of the late James Lane, M.R.C.S., Grosvenor.

DEATHS.

On August 5th, at 1, Campden House Road, Kensington, W., WILLIAM HUTCHINS CALLCOTT, younger son of John Wall Calcott, Mus. D. Oxon, and nephew of Sir Augustus Wall Calcott, R.A., aged 74.

On August 7th, at Southend, M^{me} GERARD COVENTRY (Miss Harriet Prytherch), aged 33.

On August 8th, at 32, Rue Bosquet, Brussels, LILY, third daughter of M^{me} Lemmens-Sherrington, aged 11 years.

To ADVERTISERS.—The Office of the MUSICAL WORLD is at Messrs DUNCAN DAVISON & Co.'s, 244, Regent Street, corner of Little Argyll Street (First Floor). Advertisements not later than Thursday. Payment on delivery.

The Musical World.

LONDON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 1882.

THE TOPIC OF THE DAY.



On Change.

DR QUINCE.—From Bayreuth?
DR SHIPPING.—From Bayreuth.
DR QUINCE.—Parsifal?
DR SHIPPING.—Parsifal.
DR QUINCE.—Judaism?
DR SHIPPING.—Pseudo-Christianism.
DR QUINCE.—Logical?
DR SHIPPING.—Neological.
DR QUINCE.—Pessimism?
DR SHIPPING.—Mytho-mysticism.
DR QUINCE.—Hyperbolic?
DR SHIPPING.—Diabolic.
DR QUINCE.—I shan't go.
DR SHIPPING.—Don't say so!

(Exeunt severally.)

WAGNER'S PARSIFAL.*

(Continued from page 482.)

II.

Everyone familiar with Wagner's genial theatrical talent will derive from the perusal of this book the impression that it must be highly effective on the stage. A drama put together with extraordinary skill and containing both new and dazzling situations is built up boldly before us. With regard to form, it possesses brilliant excellences, in intelligible construction, closer treatment than usual, and effective gradation, surpasses the poem of the *Nibelungen Trilogy*. It marks, moreover, a gratifying advance (or healthy retrogression) in the diction. True, even in this work there is no want of forced verbal combinations, tortured sentences of intentional obscurity, and bombastic ornamentation; but we are spared at least the childish jingle of stave-lines and alliteration. Compared with the linguistically murderous style of *Siegfried* and *Tristan*, the language in *Parsifal* is simple and natural—as far, at least, as Richard Wagner is capable of speaking simply and naturally. Though—as we shall soon see—he has, to the prejudice of the motives of action,

* From the *Neue Freie Presse*.

changed essential details in the narrative of Wolfram von Eschenbach, he has, with practical good sense, rejected everything which could disturb the unity of his plan. Thus he cuts out the knightly figure of Gawain, who, as an enamoured adventurer, forms the counterpart of Parsifal, as also King Arthur's Round Table, that secular contrast to the hyper-spiritual band of the Knights of the Graal. By this omission of everything episodic, he has gained a sober and continuously progressive plot,† which in three well constructed acts displays six artistic pictures. The born theatrical composer stands revealed in every scene, so vividly does he perceive and foresee everything as it must infallibly work on the stage. And what a rich store of new and striking effects is exhibited to us in *Parsifal*! The moving panorama and the celebration of the sacrament in the first act; the animated flowers, the miracle of the Lance, and the sinking of the magic castle, in the second; Titirel's funeral, and the concluding scene of the third, are fresh proofs of Wagner's inexhaustible dramatic fancy. In this strange plot, enigmatically shining with an intermittent light, marvel follows marvel. He who, with naively contented mind, will and can regard Wagner's *Parsifal* as a superior kind of fairy opera, as an unlimited play of fancy rejoicing in the Wondrous, looks at it in the best light and derives from it unalloyed enjoyment. All he will have to do will be to disassociate from the magic of this Festival Play the false pretension, that at the bottom of the whole there lies an unfathomably deep and sacred meaning, a philosophical and religious revelation. Unfortunately, it is upon this pretended deep and moral significance, of the Christian-Mystic element in the poem, that the greatest importance is laid.‡ On such ground we entertain serious objections to this new "Stage-Consecrative-Festival-Play" and its dramatic purport.

It is precisely in their dramatic core, no matter how brilliant its outward envelope, that most of Wagner's works§ are morbid and defective, because the characters act less from their own free will than from compulsion exerted by some transcendental power. This applies to *Parsifal* in a much higher degree than to any of Wagner's previous efforts. Not a single personage reveals the first condition of a legitimately dramatic character: free self-guidance in good and evil. Good or bad in this sense, that is: dramatically good or bad, is neither that virtuous hero, Parsifal, nor his diabolical counterpart, Klingsor, nor Kundry, who, also without any will of her own, oscillates between two irreconcilable postulates, nor the shadowy company of the Graal. In the first place, Parsifal himself, with his crime and subsequent moral purification, is, as represented by Wagner, unintelligible. An inexperienced, good-natured simpleton. In mediæval romance he is a favourite character, interpreted by Wolfram von Eschenbach through a deeper conception of his qualities. In the first act he is treated by Wagner with perfect consistency; a sort of Siegfried, only tamer. Impelled by youthful love of sport and without intending any harm, he shoots a swan; answers every question with "I do not know;" and, possessing no will of his own, allows himself to be taken to the Gralsburg, where he gazes in dumb astonishment at its strange paraphernalia and surroundings. Quite incomprehensible, on the contrary, is it, how, in the second act, the same "pure fool" can suddenly see in himself one who has to atone for deep and fearful sin. Here vengeance follows the alteration made by Wagner in the Parsifal *saga* and Wolfram's narrative—an alteration which quite nullifies the psychological motives actuating the hero and the logical development of the plot. The *Saga* and Wolfram tell us that the sick Amfortas, according to a declaration of the Graal, shall be delivered by a pure youth who, unintentionally finding his way to the Gralsburg, asks the King, of his own free

† See Dr Hanslick further on, when speaking of the music.—D. B.

‡ In order to obtain an approximate notion of the standard by which *Parsifal* is measured, and by which we, too, are expected to measure it, let the reader peruse any passage relating to that work in Wagner's official organ, the *Bayreuther Blätter*. We there find for instance: "He who believes in *Bayreuth*, in the spirit of the Wagnerian belief, belongs to the true body of Bayreuth Patrons. We shall endeavour in our *Blätter* to change into knowledge for the new readers of that paper, this lofty belief which inspires us, and, when knowledge must be dumb before the sacredness of the divine secret, *Parsifal*, with its consecrative strains, will announce to us all alike the joyous news: 'Belief lives!'" We refrain from comment.

§ Say all.—D. B.

will, "What is the matter?" By this question alone Amfortas is to be cured and the questioner appointed King in his place. But, it having been impressed on him as a rule of life that he is not to ask many questions, he omits putting this one where and when he might be expected to do so—at the moment of beholding the suffering Amfortas. He quits the Gralsburg unconscious of having committed any crime. It is not till Kundry, the messenger of the Graal, with fearful maledictions, accuses him, at Arthur's Round Table, of being a traitor, because by his silence he has neglected to effect the cure of Amfortas, which was in his hands, that he is conscious of his error and rails against Heaven for permitting it. Fallen out with himself, and in despair, he meets, in his wanderings, with an old hermit, Trevrezent, who, becoming his teacher and deliverer, reveals all about the Graal and interprets the state of Parsival's own mind. Repentant and reconciled to God, after long wanderings and heavy trials, Parsival, finding his way once more to the Graal, appears before Amfortas with the question: "Uncle, what is the matter with you?" The sick King rises cured, and delivers up his crown to Parsival. Thus Wolfram tells the story, the solution of which is poetical and intelligible. By omitting the motive of the question, Wagner, however, makes it impossible to divine what wrong Parsival has committed and what he ought properly to have done in order to bring about the cure of Amfortas, in conformity with the oracle. In Wolfram, the utterance of the Graal is perfectly clear; in Wagner, it is more obscure than anything to which we are accustomed, even from oracles: "Through pity knowing, the pure fool:—Await him, whom I chose." We do not understand this. It is in vain we ask, and again and again, how it comes to pass that Wagner's Parsival, who has not heard from anyone about his neglect, and is conscious of no wrong, suddenly, and, moreover, during the love-scene in the second act, collapsing in repentance and completely broken down with grief, from a perfect fool becomes a perfect saint. Without a single thought of the sick King, and without the shadow of conscious guilt, Parsival, "with childish ecstasy," rides forth in the second act to seek adventures, and meets with the seductive maidens* in Klingsor's gardens. Kundry, changed into a bewitching fairy, gives him "the first kiss of love," when he springs up with the cry: "Amfortas! the wound, the wound!" and then, sinking on his knees, says: "Redeemer, Saviour, Lord of Grace! How shall I, sinner that I am, atone for such guilt?"†

Let him who can understand this. Kundry herself asks him, "So, then, it was my kiss which made you all-clear-sighted?" As in the third act dogmatic, so, in the second, psychological wonders are piled up on each other. Among the latter there is a very odious example—that of the picture of Parsival's dying mother being used to drive him into sensual ecstasy. This commixture of the holy with the unholy is the more repulsive because unnecessary and unnatural. After the deciding kiss, he who has become all-clear-seeing tears himself from Kundry and sets out on the road to Amfortas armed with the miraculous spear, which he has not won in combat, but which has dropped of its own accord, as it were, into his hand. This far-fetched old fable-like motive of the sacred Lance which alone can cure the wounds it has made—the incident does not occur in Wolfram—has been probably introduced by Wagner in his *Parsifal* for the sake of a miracle the more, and a sensational climax to the act. It is precisely in this same lance, however, that Wagner's expositors, who are frequently more profound and more unintelligible than Wagner himself, revere "the saving act of pity, become endowed with knowledge."‡ To our mind, Wagner with this miraculous spear stabs his own drama to the heart. It strikes us, not as something miraculous, but as something strange, that we are unable to perceive a single trait of heroism, intellectual or material, in Parsifal, unless it be the purely negative one of resistance to sensual temptation. We observe with ever-increasing astonishment that in the course of the piece a greater and greater halo keeps forming around the head of the pure fool, until, in Wagner's hands, the latter absolutely grows up to be the Redeemer of mankind. In the scene where Kundry, as the penitent Magdalene, washes his feet and dries them with her hair, Parsifal

glides bodily into the form of Christ. Nay, at the end, even a white dove, as symbol of the Holy Ghost, settles on his head, while invisible singers chant, "Wonder of the highest Salvation! Redemption to the Redeemer!" What Wagner's *Parsifal* has done to justify his being thus covertly identified with the Saviour must be explained by others, who may also decide whether the spirit of true Christianity is promoted or degraded by such scenes. Seeing in *Parsifal* events thus lightly disguised from the life of Jesus, we may fairly ask why Wagner did not prefer glorifying Jesus himself in a "Stage-Consecrative-Festival-Play." We say this in perfect seriousness. After all, something of the conditions belonging to the Oberammergau Passion Play—its exclusiveness and rare periodical repetition—seems to have been floating before the mind of him who established the Festival Performances at Bayreuth. The person and life of our Saviour are in the highest degree dramatic, and we cannot see why a poet, with a vocation for the task, should not undertake such a drama in the same pious spirit as that in which, for instance, Munkacsy undertook a modern and realistic treatment of the historical Christ. Friedrich Hebbel long entertained the project of writing a "Christ-drama," "the most powerful of all tragedies," but died without putting pen to paper. Wagner is assuredly not inferior to Hebbel in artistic courage; he may, too, venture farther than Hebbel could, or than anyone can at the present day. "Christ's Last Supper with his Disciples," grouped after Leonardo da Vinci's painting, would assuredly be a thousand times a more moving if less pompous picture than the love-feast in *Parsifal* of the Knights of the Graal, which is merely a transparent masquerade of the Last Supper. The original would probably shock truly Christian minds less than the most earnest parody.

Just as Parsifal is governed only by transcendental powers and unexpectedly raised from a mere good-natured empty-headed youth to be the "Redeemer of the Redeemer," Kundry is a mere tool, without any will of her own, now in the hands of the Graal, and now in Klingsor's. In Wolfram von Eschenbach, Kundry, the wild messenger of the Graal, and Parsifal's beautiful corruptress (Orgeluse) are wholly different personages. Wagner, however, blends the two opposites into one in the person of Kundry. People may call the character new and interesting, but humanly intelligible it is not, and what is meant by all this hysterical confusion scarcely any one without a learned commentary can say. A kindred figure is Klingsor, a peculiar fallen angel, who, thrust forth as self-mutilator from the Graal, has become a wicked magician. He, too, is a bloodless abstraction, like Kundry, confusing us by the numerous contradictions and riddles in his utterances. The sick Amfortas remains a purely suffering personage, of whose "acute pains,"* bleeding wounds, baths, and medicaments, so much is said that we feel for him a clinico-pathological rather than tragic pity. The further the action progresses the more arbitrary, mystical, and symbolical does it become. Human nature in us at last loses all interest in these events circling exclusively amid holy miracles, and abnormal, supernatural beings and monsters, set in motion before us as though by some divine marionette-wire. To which of them can we cling with genuine human sympathy? It is, after all, only in the last scene that Lohengrin is the transcendental Knight, the seraphic soldier who must blindly follow his commander, the Graal, and abandon Elsa.—Throughout the other parts of the piece he acts and feels like a human being, and so do those around him. In *Parsifal*, on the contrary, it is the Holy Graal which is everything, signifies everything, and determines everything. What to us is the Graal? A legendary curiosity utterly unfamiliar to the feelings, whether of the common people or the educated classes, a long-since forgotten relic of fanciful superstition. The hysterical exaltation which in Wagner incessantly environs the Holy Cup, and the Holy Lance, and the Holy Blood, finds no echo at the present day, and never will find one, in German minds and German hearts. Even Calderon, who wrote for the Catholic Spaniards of the 16th century, never lost himself in such heights of the Mystically-Religious, to say nothing of the romantically-Catholic enthusiast, Zacharias Werner. Herr von Wolzogen, Wagner's official interpreter, asserts that out of Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic, "Wagner has taken and invested with additional profundity the general, human, fundamental

* Entrancing syrens would be apter.—D. B.

† Erlöser, Heiland, Herr der Huld!

Wie büss' ich Sinder so liche Schuld?

‡ Die Heilthat des wissend gewordenen Mitleids.

* "Schwerden Schmerzen."

thought;" but it strikes us that the reverse of this holds true. What Wagner has taken, and taken in a magnifying mirror, is the Mystical and Religiously-Symbolical, while it is precisely the genuinely human element in the animated and richly varied poem which he has suppressed. How beautiful and touching in Wolfram is Parival's constant thought of his wife! This true love and the uninterrupted yearning for the happiness of home, the Graal is not able to crush in him. Immediately after addressing to Amfortas the question he had previously forgotten, and assuming the regal authority, Parival rejoins his wife, the lovely Conduiramur, and his two sons, Lohengrin and Kardeiz. Of all this there is no trace in Wagner, whose Christian ideal evidently demands celibacy. It is admirably cited as Wagner's greatest deed that "he has glorified the Graal, the highest Christianly religious ideal." But for whom among us is the Graal a religious ideal? For whom was it ever such an ideal? The Christianity of our time is a very different thing to the wonder-seeking Christianity of the Knights of the Holy Graal, and perhaps not worse than the latter. It has been aptly said of Shakspeare that he is never and yet always religious. The Christian ecstasy in *Parsifal* is the direct opposite of Shakspeare's poetic healthfulness, and not unfrequently reminds us of the rhymed devotional convulsions of the German pietists.

Is that really Wagner, it will be asked, the same Richard Wagner, who, in his famous book: *Art and Religion** (1850) combated so energetically against the "lamentable influence of Christianity."†

At that period Wagner regarded Christianity as the hostile opposite of true art and the only desirable development of man—to-day he appears, going to the other extreme, to find the salvation of art exclusively in the mysteries of Christianity. If, on the threshold of his seventieth year, Wagner has turned pious, it would not be the first example of such a change and would concern no one but himself. "Religiosity is the vinous fermentation of a mind when in process of formation, and the putrefactive fermentation of a mind in a state of decomposition," says Grillparzer. We almost suspect the mind is in the course of decomposition when a great artist sees in Graal relics and saintly miracles the mission of German art, and would therewith effect the "regeneration of the human race."‡ Wagner's own utterances, and still more those of his fellow-workers and disciples, are in favour of such a generalization of his newest ideal, just as Wagner's entire theory raises into a general and exclusive law in art that only which corresponds to his own peculiar talent. Despite the efforts of a hundred Wagner Associations to greet the redeeming future in Christian mysticism, the present age will hardly find it necessary seriously to take up again Göthe's campaign against "new German religiously-patriotic art." We will—as Scherer exclaimed in reference to Wagner's *Nibelungen*—live and work on in Göthe's spirit, "not troubling ourselves about the barbarous nonsense of a half understood northern mythology, which some are attempting to force upon us as a new gospel." The most recent art-gospel of all, that of Christian mysticism, will, too, remain isolated probably in *Parsifal*, despite the most striking embodiment. It would, like the resurrection of the extinct world of the gods, bring about only intellectual retrogression and lead art to absolute poverty.

* *Die Kunst und die Religion*.

† We will quote some passages from this old profession of faith of Wagner's:—"What the loyal poet sees at the first glance is that Christianity was neither art nor able in any way to bring from out itself really living art. . . . Hypocrisy is the most prominent feature, the proper physiognomy, of all Christian ages down to our own days, and this vice became more glaring and shameless in exact proportion as mankind refreshed themselves anew from their inward inexhaustible spring, and in despite of Christianity, were maturing for the performance of their real task. . . . The artistic expression of this new world could never assert itself save as in opposition to and battling against the spirit of Christianity. . . . Knightly poetry was the honourable hypocrisy of fanaticism. The Christian art-ideal could, in truth, manifest itself only as a fixed idea as the creation of a fever paroxysm, because it was precisely from beyond human nature that it was compelled to take its purpose and aim, and, consequently, must find in that nature its negation and end. The human art of the Future will strike firm root in the ever fresh and verdant soil of Nature."

‡ Thus Christianity, according to the Book of Wagner, is no better than Judaism.—D. B.

We know that injustice is done to every Wagnerian opera by considering the text-book apart from the music and all the apparatus of the stage. If we have done so in the present instance, we have only complied with Wagner's own utterances, inasmuch as he claims for his text-books the value and importance of independent poems, and, therefore, publishes them, as such, in book form, a considerable time before the appearance of the scores. Wagner's pretension, too, was the more certain of being gratified, because the book of *Parsifal* was received with a tumult of admiration in the great Wagnerian camp. In all Wagner's operas the music has softened the faults and greatly enhanced the excellences of the book. The same thing will, no doubt, be repeated with *Parsifal*, and we anxiously look forward to the first performance.

(To be continued.)

CONCERT.

THE first of a series of Promenade Concerts was given at Covent Garden Theatre on Saturday night before a numerous audience. The stage has been converted into the market-place of a Spanish town, and the theatre is lighted by electric lamps on the Brush system. An efficient band, comprising Mr Carrodus (leader), Mr Val Nicholson, Mr Howell, Mr Radcliff, Mr Dubrucq, and other excellent artists, has been secured, Mr W. G. Crowe acting as conductor. The programme, consisting, as usual, of a mixture of "classical" and extremely popular pieces, does not call for notice, but it fully satisfied the audience, which applauded Mr Carrodus, Miss Florence Waud, and other soloists, to the echo.—*Times*, Aug. 8.

PROVINCIAL.

SWANSEA.—A grand Eisteddfod was held in the Albert Hall on Monday afternoon, August 8th, when seven choirs, numbering about 1,500 voices, competed for various money-prizes, the highest (£33) being gained by the Pembroke Dock choir. The Mayor of Swansea (Alderman Davies) presided. Mr John Thomas, Llanwrtyd, was adjudicator; the Rev E. Edwards, conductor; and Miss B. Williams, Swansea, accompanist.

WIGAN.—To-day, at the County Court, before Judge Foulkes, George Wood, trading as J. B. Cramer & Co., of 201, Regent Street, London, music publishers and proprietor, who has the sole liberty of representing, or causing to be represented, the opera entitled *La Fille du Tambour Major*, claimed from Barry Stuart, manager of the Theatre Royal, Wigan, the sum of £15, as damages, for representing, or causing it to be represented, at his theatre in the week ending May 13th. The defendant did not dispute that plaintiff owned the copyright of the opera. His defence to the action was that he did not represent or cause the piece to be represented, but that the performance was given by Mr R. South and his company, who, in his agreement, undertook to pay author's fees. Mr. South, it was admitted by Mr Paraday, witness for the plaintiff, had originally some sort of arrangement with plaintiff as regards the performance of this opera, but that he had not paid the fees, and had been written to discontinue representing it. His Honour gave judgment for defendant.

OTLEY.—The sixteenth annual concert of the Otley Choral Union was celebrated in the Parish Church at Otley on Saturday, July 29. Regarded from a musical point of view the proceedings were a success, but the congregation was not so large as usual, and the amount realized by the offertory was trifling. The choirs comprising the Union and the number of choristers from each were as follows:—Esholt 13, Guiseley 19, Horsforth 28, Leathley 1, Otley 33, Pool 18, Kirkstall 43, Woodside 29; total 174, divided as follows:—Soprano 100, Alto 17, tenor 30, bass 27. The service, which commenced at three o'clock, was full choral. The choristers, robed in white surplices, entered the sacred edifice at the north door, singing the processional, "Rejoice, ye pure in heart," to a tune by the Rev. A. L. Lewington. The prayers were intoned by the Rev. H. J. Wilkinson. The proper psalms for the occasion were the 90th, 91st, and 92nd, sung with great effect to double chants by Soaper and Sir John Goss. The Rev. W. Goodall read the first, and the Rev. T. R. W. Pearson the second lesson. The *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* were sung to Dr. Stainer's setting of the Parisian Tone. The anthem, "Send out Thy light," adapted to music by Gounod, though well given, was not calculated to demonstrate the full power of so large a body of voices. The hymn "Nearer, my God, to Thee" preceding the sermon, a composition of Professor Hullah's, and the hymn at the close of the sermon, set to music by the Rev. J. B. Dykes, "Hark, the sound of holy voices," were effectively rendered.

The Rev. J. Myddleton-Evans preached an appropriate sermon. Perhaps the most striking vocal display was in the concluding "Amen," of Dr. Stainer. The recessional, "Glorious things of Thee are spoken," was sung to music by J. Schop. Mr. A. Longfield presided at the organ, and Mr Stables, of Kirkstall, conducted.

BRIGHTON.—At the "fashionable concert" given in the Royal Aquarium on Saturday morning last, Madame Antoinette Sterling was the attraction, singing with her accustomed charm "Quando a te lieta," (*Dinorah*), "The Star and the Child," and Hullah's setting of the "Three Fishers." At the theatre *Les Cloches de Corneville* has been played, but did not attract particular attention. Mme Sarah Bernhardt is coming next week and will play on Monday and Wednesday in *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, and on Tuesday in *La Dame aux Camélias*. On Thursday Mr and Mrs German Reed gave their entertainment in the Royal Pavilion with success.

MISS PRYTHERCK.

We regret to announce the death of Miss Harriet Prytherck (Madame Gerard Coventry), which occurred at Southend on Monday last. She was the daughter of Dr Prytherck, an eminent physician of Ruthen (North Wales), and at an early age exhibited great musical capacity, obtaining the silver medal prize for the best performance on the pianoforte at an Eisteddfod held in her native town, having received instructions from Mr Charles Hallé and other esteemed professors. Miss Prytherck played successfully at M. Riviere's concerts at Covent Garden, at Sir Julius Benedict's at the Royal Aquarium, and for some years was pianist at the Royal Polytechnic Institution. Her loss is deeply felt by her husband (the well-known vocalist), as well as by numerous friends to whom she had endeared herself by her amiable and unassuming manners.

PARK MUSIC.

Many thousands of people were to be seen, last Monday evening, clustered around the music platform in Regent's Park, listening to the performance of a band striving, and that not unsuccessfully, to enliven a Londoner's holiday. Their efforts certainly were not unappreciated by those present, who, unfortunately, found it inconvenient or impossible to spend the Bank holiday in the country—for does not the boon, associated with Sir John Lubbock's name, need the pebbly beach, breezy down, or rural lane for full realization? Those forced to stay at home are glad, however, to leave, if only for an hour or two, the cheerless house and deserted street, and roam in the Parks, where still, though autumn is so near, green grass, bright flowers, and leafy trees keep up some kind of summer state. It would be interesting to know how many trudged along the Broad walk in Regent's Park on Monday last. Certain it is that if each had taken a twig away, the trees would now be as bare as if unrobing winter had come weeks before its time, and in a single clutch had stripped them of their dress. The band, forming the nucleus of this vast crowd, was perched upon a stand, erected in a corner of the ground near the enclosure allotted to the Zoological Gardens, and from that eminence discoursed to man and neighbouring beast, music which poets say is good for both. Is it not a far-seeing policy, as well as a delicate compliment, on the part of the Park Ranger to place the musicians' stand so near the lions and tigers? If, however, the caged "wild fowl" in the near Zoo were as mild under the influence of sweet sounds as the multitude at large on the green, then assuredly the lion may lie down with the lamb; for no flock, soothed by shepherd pipe, was ever gentler than the listening crowd on Monday.

The one characteristic of the audience was placidity. But the holiday fixed in the van of autumn is perhaps the most sober of the four observed in the year. Christmas is avowedly the season for Bacchanalian revels, whilst Easter-tide is not so free as it should be from the taint of drunkenness which mars English festivals, but in the August holiday, without taking into account the aggressive force at present felt of "blue ribbon" men, more sobriety is observed. It is noteworthy that no brawling men and women were in Regent's Park on Monday evening; neither did the hysterical ravings of the "Salvation Army" break the harmony of the orchestra. Only the cry, "Run it out! run it out!" of the cricketer in the distance

was heard during the pauses in the music. Dance strains even did not move nimble feet to foot it on the grass. True, now and again the child in arms rocked its head and beat its tiny hands, when the mother would sway her lively burden to and fro to the measure; and sprightly boys and girls betrayed giddiness in awkward gambols; but youths and maidens were constrained by the sobriety of the scene to forego the levity of the waltz. Men, tired with toil, stretched themselves upon the ground, whilst their little ones clambered over their brawny chests; and here and there matrons, not a few with the sad look of care upon their brows, unbent to the hour and romped with their offspring as though they themselves felt young again; but the great mass of the throng sat, or stood, listening to the music without excitement, and apparently without emotion.

No sound of applause was heard at the close of any of the pieces; every number of the programme was received with a silence worthy of concerts of the nobility. Why, the Regent's Park audience felt no more impulse to clap hands at the music than they did to cheer the sinking sun, who, by the way, was going down behind trees, at the western part of the grounds, in right kingly fashion. His majesty seemed to be flooding the foliage with molten gold, as if making a cast of the scene to take with him on his ocean voyage. He mantled near clouds with robes of crimson and orange, and in wantonness of wealth threw rubies upon the skirts of the high cloud that stretched like a lace curtain across the heavens. Now, it is almost beyond belief, the holiday folk seemed as indifferent to the sight as a rich man to his servants' liveries. Why, it may be asked by some fanatic, did they not all leap to their feet and shout Haydn's hymn, "The heavens are telling"? A's, such vocal utterance is not given them. Still, possibly, feelings of pleasure and joy might have been hidden somewhere behind the stolid appearance, dumb tongue, and unkindled eye—nay, it is certain that both sight and sound were in some measure enjoyed by the people in the undemonstrative manner of their class and race.

The Band upon the whole was fairly good, especially when it is considered that the funds come chiefly from two sources, the sale of penny programmes, and the penny charge for a seat. Indeed, under these circumstances, it is surprising to find the music so well performed. Still, the orchestra might easily be enlarged and enriched, and choral forces could then be added. No doubt it is useless to address the Legislature to attend to such a want, for they are too much engaged in party wranglings and scramblings to spare a moment upon music, the want of which they themselves rarely feel. Neither can aid be expected from the leaders of society. True, they are at this moment busily engaged in working out plans for the better education of music professors, whose occupation will be teaching the upper and middle classes. It must be long, however, before such teachings reach the lower orders, who need first of all to become familiar with, and then gradually to know the use and value of, music. At present they stand in need of plain music well done, and free from "music-hall" taint; the academical or collegiate class-room can affect them now as little as the South Kensington School of Cookery does their daily meal. Who, watching the sober, orderly, and self-contained holiday folk in Regent's Park on Monday last, can doubt their capacity, when aroused into activity, of working out their own musical history? Let the labouring classes be but really in earnest in the pursuit of music, and they will most assuredly do better without, than with, state guidance or aristocratic patronage.

PENCERDD GWFFYN.

VIENNA.—The Society of the Friends of Music at Vienna have issued the report of their Conservatory, founded in 1817, for the scholastic year, 1881-82. The professorial staff consisted of 50 ordinary and 4 extraordinary members. The school for music was attended by 694 (ordinary) native and 53 foreign (extraordinary) students; the school for acting by 31 native (ordinary) and 4 foreign (extraordinary) students, making a total of 782 (extraordinary and ordinary).* Of these, 80 simply completed their course of study, 50 (ordinary) received diplomas, and 14 (extraordinary) gained the Society's medal. Although not extraordinary, this result cannot fairly be set down as ordinary.

* This is more than ordinarily extraordinary.—Dr Blinge.

GZPZPBGLMNPJHRQZ.

(From our Teutonic Correspondent.)

EXOTIC MUSICPLANT (Musikpflanzen) a correspondent of the "Evening post" writes, Liszt has brought a few new startling pupils to Bayreuth—the first a Turk he is Christian although son of a Pasha of Constantinopol, a real Turkish face with a bold nose—2nd a still more interesting young man of 27 an Alto of colossal dimension, he sings in the Chorus in Parsifal—He is the son of a Railway Manager of Paris, he is beardless and looks like a female, but his speech is that of a man—His feet are small like a lady's foot, he is very small, but well made and very neat and gracefully looking His face is pretty, a bold nose and long curled hair, combed back—He sings Handel's *Lascia che io pianga* a forth lower but with perfect pure Alto tone and voice—The wonder is a follower of the Liszt train and suite, and will he or she be the Lion of the season—

Extracts from the Frankfurt Gazette Wednesday July 26 Bayreuth has put on a festivity garment, flags and garments are flying from all the houses, the population are in the favour of the great event of the Festival of a new work Wagner's Parsifal—No more adversaries of the new school, all are for him and the openers are silent.—

The Evenings are spend at Angermans public place, where the circle of artists drink beer and discuss the words that came from the masters lips, and the elite of Solists and patrons assemble at the "Sonne" and the Meister is the topic of all praise.

Wagner gave a garden fete and a Banquet, to which were 600 guests invited. Wagner spoke first in a toast to his artists he said—"It is six years since we met here."

[A capital speech, but uncommonly brief.—Dr Blidge.]



PARSIFAL.

(From the same.)

Bayreuth, Aug. 8.

Here, even more than in the "Nibelungen" has Wagner stepped over the border of all art, and this step has taken in the performance, its revenge—Form too widely spread, and he would but *cannot*, and leaves a blank. We want in art see *humans* and no Gods, and mystic unnatural element of the action, which Wagner already tried in Tristan, has proved his *faintness*. To make a subject of religion in music, is a desperate attempt, for musical art has only one object, which is beauty—A union of both is only *possible* in its simple form. As long as this is the case a special religious christian art can exist as in Raphael or Palestrina—Those grand times are gone by—art and religion go since long *their own way* and the artist does not look upon both with the same eyes as in those times. He who will bring religion on the stage—and Bayreuth theatre is the stage will naturally have to fight against prejudicious difficulties.

Who likes his religion will look at this profanisation, with stage scenery and effects, many romantic experimentals have been made, ever without success. The old masters have told us the real truth, what Wagner tries to say in Parsifal.

The text to Parsifal, comes from Wolfram v Eshenbach Epos, but is changed in word and action, already the name Parsifal—old provençal, translated Reine Thor, pure innocent.

Parsifal is a melange of a Siegfried or Christus,—Kundry is a less happy combination a little Orgeluse, Herodias or Walkure—The Conjuror Klingsor plays here a prominent part, and is a kind of proprietor of a "Venusberg." Gurnemann has become from a knight a Gralsritter,—and King Amfortas, has had several changes of his character. The whole opera is written in Leit-motive, which are instrumentally beautifully arranged—but of melody no trace—We find now and then a blossom of melody which is soon overtaken by the clever combination of instruments in the Orchestra. Admirers of the Meister, will find this to be the style of the Opera, requires it so, if this to be a style, I *prefer* none than a tedious one.

An Adagio movement of great effect opens the Opera, and when the curtain rises, the Scene represents a very pretty forest-

scene. In the foreground is Gurnemann and his 2 Pages and the Morningcall sounds from 2 Trumpets. Gurnemann wakes and calls his 2 attendants, 2 Knights appear and say that Amfortas wound will not heal until the holly spear is found, with which Kundry had wounded him—this weapon can only be discovered by a holly Knight, through pity knowing the pure innocent, Reine Thor, when Parsifal appears, in similar style as in *Lohengrin* he had killed a Swan, most likely the grandfather of the one that brings Lohengrin, and when he is told of his wrong he breaks his arrows and spear—Kundry tells him from whence he came. Meanwhile the King Amfortas returns from his bath, and Gurnemann and Parsifal go off to the Gralsburg. Here the wandering scenery commences through forest Hills the 2 Knights come to the Graltower.

Solemn bells are heard first soft than louder and louder with an Instrumental accompaniment of grand power, and ends in a Chorus, Teum litzen Liebesmakt beginning by Basses followed by the Tenor, Altos and Boys ending *Der Glaube lilt, die Taube steult* Amfortas is brought in the holly Gral put down and Titurell the invisible. With painful cries from Amfortas the holly shrine is opened where the blood of Christ is preserved. Then the Chorus of the Knights in three parts "Selig im Glauben which ends in the distance by Juvenil voice is of musical beauty and Gurnemann pushes Parsifal out of the room with the words, leave in future the swan alone and hunt the geos—which ends the first act, after some lengthened recitatives.

The second act opens with Klingsor Enchanting Castle, the Orchestra plays the Enchanting Motif, Klingsor seas in his mirror Parsifal approaching and summons Kundry, to try her art with him. In a blue light she come up, crying. The laughing Motif is played. The Knights are called to fight the laughing Parsifal. The whole fight passes behind the scene accompanied by the Orchestra with the Reit motif. Parsifal is the victor, Kundry and Klingsor Sink in the ground.

The scene changes to the enchanting garden Flower girls appear at the garden wall Parsifal looks at the enchanting scene the crowd tries to seduce him in the midst of a Ballet and Kundry this time young and beautiful comes and sings of his mother's love and her own and tries her seductif art but she also fails, until Kundry calls Klingsor and the holly spear, which lances at him, but oh wonder, it remains over his head and Parsifal seizes it and then with a crush and cry the enchanting garden disappears in the Ground—This second act is full of beautiful Chorus—but the duett between Parsifal and Kundry lacks the freshness of the similar seductif freshness of the Tannhäuser.

The third act again opens with the Graltemple—it is Good Friday—a lovely springscenery. Gurnemann as an old man comes from his house, and listens to the screams of Kundry. He wakes her with the beautiful springmotif. She is again attired as in the first act. She wakes and is now again the penitence feeling Parsifal appears in black harness, Gurnemann meets him and Parsifal takes his helmet off Gurnemann recognizes the holly spear and calls "Heil, heil"—he tells how all knights are in morning and Titurell had died, that the Gral had not been seen—Parsifal falls fainting, Kundry brings him to the Hill and washes his feet Parsifal baptises her and then with Gurnemann goes to the Gralsburg.

The wandering scenery does not take place here as in the first act, the curtain falls and the Orchestra plays the wandering motif. Again the Gral knights appear with the dying Amfortas Titurel's coffin is placed on the Highalter. All make room now for Parsifal who touches the King with the holly Spear, Amfortas is beaming with a heavenly light, and Parsifal orders the Gral to be opened, it becomes glowing, from the roof appears a pigeon; all knights bow to the new King, and the Chorus with a pp sing the "Hochsten Heiles Wunder Erlösung dem Erleiser." The whole act bears a peaceful aspect and melodious strains. At the end scene we are in church again, but it is curious to see all painted and roushed in such a holly scene.

MAX SCHÖNAN.

To Shaver Silver, Esq.

The grand concert at the Brussels Waux-Hall, at which several of Massenet's new works, conducted by the composer himself, were announced for performance, was fixed for Tuesday, the 8th inst.

COVENT GARDEN PROMENADE CONCERTS.

These entertainments, which for a good many years have constituted an essential feature of the summer and early autumn season, were resumed on Saturday under precisely the same conditions as last year. A new decoration was, of course, a *sine quâ non*, and it must be admitted that the set-scene behind the orchestra, representing a Spanish town, its Moorish gates and picturesque surroundings, not to enter into further details which have already been described at length, says much for the taste of Messrs Jones & Barber, who, with the artistic aid of Mr Bruce Smith and the co-operation of Mr C. Tod Pullen, have effected the whole transformation in the brief lapse of time between the last performance of Italian opera and the first Promenade Concert. That the Floral Hall is again appropriated as a lounge, where smoking is the rule rather than the exception—whatever may in strict conscience be said against the desecration of a place which, ever and anon during the operatic season, is the cherished home of rare unfeathered singing-birds and fashionable assemblies—will be taken for granted. Those, however, who go to the theatre neither to while away an hour in the Floral Hall, nor to chat with the ladies behind the counters of the restaurant (all, by the way, clad in appropriate Iberian costume), but simply to hear the music, have little cause for disappointment. There is, as before, a numerous and highly efficient orchestra, almost exclusively consisting of English players, with Mr Carrodus, whose name is a tower of strength, as leading violin, and professors of well-earned eminence at the head of each separate department—Messrs Doyle, Howell, Ould, Radcliff, Barrett, Egerton, Standen, Hughes, Cheshire, passing necessarily over many others, for example. Mr A. Gwyllyn Crowe, again musical director and conductor, bids fair to confirm the favourable impression created by his exertions a twelvemonth since. Without any pretence of *finesse* or intellectually “new readings,” he handles the *bâton* firmly and discreetly, and his orchestra goes well accordingly, as was shown, among other things, by the excellent performance of Rossini's ever fresh and brilliant overture to *La Gazza Ladra*, and the *andante*, in A flat, from Beethoven's great C minor Symphony, in the first part of the concert. It was also demonstrated in the *andante* and *rombo* from Mendelssohn's Pianoforte Concerto No. 1, played with spirit by Miss Florence Wand, and the more trying accompaniments to the opening movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, magnificently executed by our great English violinist, Mr Carrodus, who introduced the elaborate and difficult *cadenza* of his friend and preceptor, the late Bernhard Molique. Other proofs of the efficiency of the orchestra were given in the ballet-music from Gounod's *Faust*, and a “grand selection” from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*; and it was agreeable for genuine lovers of music to observe how attentively these pieces were listened to by a majority of the overflowing audience, and how loudly they were applauded. The second part began with a *pot-pourri* on familiar English melodies, well selected and cleverly put together by Mr Fred Godfrey, in which solos for the cornet-a-pistons (Mr Howard Reynolds, the Koenig of the period), ophicleide (Mr S. Hughes, who, not for the first time, showed what music could be got out of that seemingly intractable instrument, when ably and judiciously handled), piccolo (Mr W. L. Barrett, as consummate a master of the little flute as his constant associate, Mr Radcliff, is of the big one), and trombone (Mr Hadfield), were prominent features, the pompous march from Gounod's *Reine de Saba* bringing the concert to a close. The vocalists were Mdlle Elly Warnots (late of the Royal Italian Opera), Mdme Enriquez, Messrs Vernon Rigby and Thurley Beale, a thoroughly competent quartet, from whom a part-song by Mendelssohn, or our own regretted Henry Smart, would have been thrice welcome. As it chanced, however, their exertions were limited to solos. Mdlle Warnots sang the air, with violin *obligato*, from Hérold's *Pré aux Clercs* (so often heard from the mellifluous lips of Albani), in such finished style, and was so admirably accompanied by Mr Carrodus, that an “encore” became inevitable. A similar compliment was paid to Mr Vernon Rigby, who gave the ballad, “Anita” (Brinley Richards), with genuine expression, but instead of repeating it when called back to the orchestra substituted “La donna e mobile,” from Verdi's *Rigoletto*; Madame Enriquez, too, was equally and as deservedly successful with Ciro Finetti's “Heaven and Earth,” which, in obedience to the unanimous wish of the audience, she was compelled to sing again. Into further particulars it is needless to enter. The concert, unexceptionable of its kind throughout and giving unqualified satisfaction augured favourably for the performances to come. On Wednesday, the first “Classical Night,” the orchestral symphony chosen for the occasion was Mozart's incomparable C major, with the fugued *finale*, which the famous pianist and composer J. B. Cramer (not Mozart) christened “Jupiter,” a name long been accepted as gospel, and likely to stick to it for ever.—*Graphic*.

MUSIC AT BOULOGNE-SUR-MER.

(From a Correspondent.)

M. Ketten has been singing in *Le Trouvère*, *Rigoletto*, &c., since my last communication, and *Giroflé-Girofla*, *La fille du Tambour Majeur*, and other opera-bouffes, &c., have been given with fair success: but Mdme Hasselmans as Léonore in the *Trouvère*, and Ophélie in *Hamlet*, carried off the palm. Our afternoon concerts have improved under M. Etesse, who has become more accustomed to conduct chamber music. The fair is in full swing, wild beasts, theatres, fat parties and lean parties being in great force. The lion's wife, hight Sultania, gave birth to twins on her way here, but they died at the age of seven and nine days respectively, and have been given to Dr Chater to place in the local Museum. The learned doctor has the superintendence of the Anatomical Human and Comparative Department, and, no doubt, will have the skins stuffed and the skeletons prepared for the Comparative Anatomy Section of the Museum.

X. T. R.

Boulogne-sur-Mer, August 8, 1882.

MUSIC AT THE ANTIPODES.

(From our own Correspondent.)

The most successful opera season in this city for years past was brought to a close on the evening of the 3rd inst. at the Bijou Theatre. Since I wrote last the company has produced (in English) the *Rose of Castile*, *Il Trovatore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Martha*, *Maritana*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, and, for the first time in Melbourne, Ambrose Thomas's *Mignon*. Mr Edward Farley, principal bass, having seceded, was replaced by Mr J. Barrington. In all the operas the leading parts were taken by Miss Annis Montague and Mr Charles Turner, Signora Venosta, Miss Josephine Deakin, and Mr J. Gordon being valuable coadjutors. The theatre was closed on the 18th ult. owing to the indisposition of Miss Montague, and on the two following nights Miss Deakin assumed the part of Maritana. *Mignon* was produced on the 22nd ult. with Miss Montague as the heroine, Mr Turner as Wilhelm Meister, Miss Deakin as Filina, Signora Venosta as Federie, and Mr Gairnor as Lotario. The performance was effective, particularly as regards the impersonation of Mignon. On the 3rd inst. Miss Montague took a farewell benefit, appearing in two acts of *Lucia* and two acts of *Faust*. Between the selections a bracelet set with diamonds and sapphires was presented to her on behalf of the company. The season, which opened with the *Bohemian Girl* on the 27th March, closed with *Mignon*. The success achieved is due, in a great measure, to the exertions of the *impressario*, Signor D. De Vivo. The company will now perform at Sandhurst, Ballarat, and Geelong, and, after a week at the Melbourne Opera-house, proceed to Queensland.—A concert was given in the Melbourne Town Hall on the 13th ult., in aid of the persecuted Jews in Southern Russia. The vocalists were Mdme. Simonsen, Misses Hill, F. Leon, and Christian, Signor Paladini, Messrs S. Lamble, B. T. Moroney, W. A. Staker, and A. Brenner; the instrumentalists were Mdme Tasea, Mr M. Simonsen, Miss King, Mr David Lee, and the Melbourne Quartet Company (Messrs Curtis, Jäger, P. and A. Montague); the accompanists were Messrs A. Moul, W. Hunter, and C. Sykes. The orchestra, led by Mr G. Weston, was conducted by Signor A. Zehmoni; Mr A. Plumpton superintending the whole.—The Toorak Harmonic Society, on the 16th ult., performed Sterndale Bennett's *May Queen* at the Town Hall, Prahran, near Melbourne, with full chorus and orchestra. The vocalists were Miss Louise Siedl, Mrs Forster, Messrs W. A. Staker, Bede Walsh, and B. T. Moroney.—On the evening of the Queen's birthday, Tennyson's “Hands all round” was sung by 4,000 State school children, under the direction of Mr J. Summers, before a very large audience. The performance was by “command” of the Minister of Education; but neither the poetry nor the music made any great impression.—The third concert of the Melbourne School of Music, Mr C. W. Russell, Principal, was given in the Athenæum Hall on the 24th ult. The performers were Miss Rosina Carandini, vocalist; Mr Curtis (violin); Mr Hart (violoncello); Misses A. King, C. Atchison, and F. Hay (piano).—The first of a series of Popular Concerts, inaugurated by Mr T. E. Guenett, was held in the Athenæum on the 31st ult. The programme included Schumann's

pianoforte quartet in E flat (Messrs O. Linden, G. Weston, Cope, tenor, and Hart). Mr Linden played Beethoven's Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, which was followed by Schubert's octet, Op. 116, for stringed instruments, combined with clarinet, horn, and trombone, played by Messrs Weston, P. Montague, Wiedemann, Harte, Hore, Lundberg, White, and Berg. Miss Rosina contributed songs by Mendelssohn and Schubert.—The Hewett Musettes opened at St George's Hall, on the 3rd inst., with the operetta of *Rain*. The principals of the company are Miss Eva Pear, a cornet soloist, and Mr Hewett, who plays eight instruments.

The bi-weekly recitals at the Town Hall, by Mr D. Lee, city organist, continue to be well patronised.—A new oratorio, by the Rev. G. W. Torrance, Mus.Doc., T.C.D., incumbent of Holy Trinity Church, Balaclava, near Melbourne, is in active rehearsal.—A benefit concert was given in the Town Hall, on the 3rd inst., to Signora Agnes Palma, the contralto who first came to Australia, in 1879, with the late Mr Lyster's opera company, which included Mme Rose Hersee. The vocalists at the concert were Signora Palma, Misses Rosina Carandini, Nellie Stuart, J. O'Brien, Mr B. T. Moroney, and several amateurs.

J. L. T. F.

Melbourne, June 5, 1882.

[If our correspondent wishes his communications to appear henceforth in the *Musical World*, he is earnestly requested to write only upon one side of the paper; otherwise we are compelled to say, with much regret, that we cannot answer for their being published.—*W.* 23.]

AREZZO.—The statue of Guido Monaco, due to the chisel of Sig. Salvini, the sculptor, arrived from Bologna some time since, and, together with the bas-reliefs from Florence which were to follow, was to be erected on the chosen site by the 15th inst. During the Festival there will be eight performances of Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele*, and three grand orchestral concerts, all under the direction of Luigi Mancinelli.

ST PETERSBURGH.—According to a correspondent of the *Schlesische Zeitung*, the Emperor of Russia, who is extremely fond of music, has given orders for the formation of a regular Court Band. Hitherto, the best bands of the Guard Regiments have officiated at the Imperial Court, but this arrangement was attended by all kinds of inconvenience for the military service of the bands and by other drawbacks. In order, however, not to incur too heavy an expenditure, the band of the Chevalier (Garde-du-Corps) Regiment will be done away with, and most of its members drafted into the new band. Strict orders have been issued that none but Russians shall be members. In all the bands of the Guard Regiments there are many German and Austrian subjects, the bandmasters being almost exclusively Germans. In contradiction to the orders above mentioned is the fact that a former Austrian bandmaster, who now holds a similar position in a Guard Regiment here, has been appointed conductor of the Court Band. As the members will not be allowed to give private concerts, and will thus have to sacrifice a lucrative source of income, the pay will, measured by a Russian standard, be exceptionally high. The conductor, it is said, will receive 5,000 roubles a year. A post of Chief Director of the Imperial Court Band will also be created, and Herr von Beers, till now captain in a Guard Regiment, appointed to it.

SYDNEY.—A complimentary concert, under distinguished patronage, given to the renowned violinist, August Wilhelmj, last evening, was attended by one of the largest and most fashionable audiences ever assembled in the Masonic Hall. The programme opened with a piano solo, "Forest Scenes," by Mr Max Vogrich, and followed by Cowen's "The Better Land," for which Miss Marie Conron received an encore. The *beneficiaire* next appeared, and was received with enthusiastic applause. His first number was one of his own compositions, *In Memory of Vieuxtemps*, in which his wonderful mastery over the instrument was well displayed, an encore being vociferously demanded and responded to. The second part of the concert began with Wilhelmj's German song, "Das Voglein," sung by Miss Conron, who again secured an encore. Herr Wilhelmj's second performance—Wieniawski's *Grande Polonaise*—marked by marvellous vigour, combined with delicacy of touch and refinement of phrasing, was heard by the whole assembly with rapt attention, and was succeeded by another unanimous encore. He then gave the well-known air of Hans Sachs, from the *Meistersinger* of Wagner, to which, the audience being still unsatisfied, the distinguished fiddler added his own transcription of a beautiful aria by J. S. Bach. The concert was in every sense a marked success.—*Sydney "Daily Telegraph," May 23.*

THE HOLY GRAIL.

The subjoined letter was addressed to *The Times* not long since:—

SIR,—Wagner's opera suggests the question, "What is the meaning of the Sangreal?" Mr Tennyson has translated it into Holy Grail, and Wagner has the Castle of the Grail, and his hero is crowned King of the Grail. The true explanation I believe to be this—the Legend of the Sudarium, which is one of the mysteries of the Rosary, makes St Veronica present a handkerchief to our Lord, on which the *Virtus Sanctus* remained imprinted. This portraiture was called "Vera Eikon," or true image, and thence the name of Veronica was derived, the name of the woman being Berenice. In the same way the Sang-reel, or Sang-real, the real blood, became *Sangreal*. It was in the cup preserved by Joseph of Arimathea, and which was used in the Last Supper, or *Cena Domini*. A corruption of the word Sangreal made Grail and Holy Grail. The key to the story of the quest of the Sangreal is in the Sermon on the Mount, which says, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." The quest was for the Real Presence in the holy sacrifice and the true blood preserved by Joseph of Arimathea. But Sir Percival was disqualified. He was not pure of heart, on account of his intrigue with Queen Guinevere. Those who know anything of mystical theology will easily understand the obscure passages in the original legend. GEORGE BOWYER.

What does Sir George mean by Percival's "intrigue with Queen Guinevere"? Percival has nothing to say to that Queen. Sir George confounds him (confound him!) with Lancelot. In other respects his letter did not remain unanswered, as will be seen by what follows:—

SIR,—The letter of Sir G. Bowyer on the subject of the Holy Grail induces me to send you an extract from two of the late Bishop Thirlwall's "Letters to a Friend" upon the same subject. I think they can hardly have come under the notice of Sir G. Bowyer, or he would not have retained such confidence in his own interpretation:—

Abergelli Palace, Jan., 25, 1870.

" . . . Sir George Bowyer apparently believes that real is common to French and English in the same sense. Real might mean royal, only that it is not the French and Provençal, but the Spanish and Italian form. Of the meaning of the variously-spelt Grail Sir George Bowyer appears never to have heard. Or of the *Sacro Catino*. I have a guide to Genoa which accurately describes the emerald vase shown in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo, and gives a plate of it. It is an hexagonal open vessel, very narrow at the base. When Sir George says that the 'vessel' of the legend 'was undoubtedly the chalice' he contradicts himself, for, according to his etymology, no vessel at all is 'alluded to' in the name. Among scholars there is, I believe, perfect unanimity on this question. The authority of Littré would, to those who know his work, be sufficient; but it is confirmed by that of Diez, who devotes a page of his 'Lexicon of the Romance Languages' to the word Grail, which he explains in the same way as Littré. He observes (I translate his German), 'Saint Graal, the origin of which from Sang Royal is refuted by the Provençal forms, is in the epic poems the dish out of which Christ partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. . . .'

"Jan., 1870.

" . . . The only reason that at present occurs to me as one which may have governed Tennyson's spelling of Holy Grail is that he wished to mark the pronunciation. It is, however, possible that he meant to warn the reader against the false etymology into which, I see, you have fallen. Nothing, I believe, is more certain than that the name has nothing to do with *sang*, either real or royal. Indeed, if you only reflect for a moment on the wildness of a quest after a liquid, I think you will see that this etymology is out of the question. Littré gives the true one—'Provenc., grasal, grazal, grazans; anc. Catal., gresal; anc. Espagn., grial; bas Latin, gradalis, gradalus—sorte de vase, origine inconnue.' There never has been any doubt that it was the name of a vessel. Did not you know that it was brought from the Holy Land to Genoa, where it is still shown under the name of 'il sacro catino' and by persons not in the secret believed to be a single emerald, being, in fact, a piece of green glass?"

P. D. B.

The Municipal Council of Paris have expressed a wish that one of the leading thoroughfares of that capital shall bear the name of Berlioz.—(Why not? We have the Rues Méhul, Boieldieu, Rossini, Auber, Meyerbeer, &c., &c.—*Dr Blüthgen*.)

WAIFS.

MAD. ESSIROFF "of the fairy fingers" has made arrangements for another tour in Germany, which will begin at her favourite town of Breslau, during the current month.

In obedience to the unwritten law which has for many past years prescribed that the Wednesday nights of the Covent Garden Promenade Concert season shall be devoted to "classical" music, the first of the current season was given last night, and attracted a very large audience. The programme included (in the classical Part I.) Schubert's overture to *Rosamunde*, Reinecke's prelude to *King Manfred*, Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony, played without abridgment, the *andante* and *rondo* from Beethoven's pianoforte concerto in E flat, the *andante* and *rondo finale* from Mendelssohn's violin concerto, and an orchestral selection from Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, arranged by Mr W. Gwyllyn Crowe. The orchestral selections above-named were admirably played, and Mr Crowe's *Zauberflöte* selection, although open to criticism in some respects, merited the applause it received. The young lady who attempted the extracts from Beethoven's concerto was greatly overtasked. Happily it was a musician of the highest rank, Mr J. T. Carrodus, to whom Mendelssohn's violin concerto was entrusted. He played the lovely *andante* exquisitely, and his perfect mechanism in the *rondo* elicited well-merited and prolonged applause. The second part of the concert was "miscellaneous."

Bevignani is drinking waters at Recoaro.

Gaetano Braga, the violoncellist, is at Giulianova.

Mr Aguilar and family are at Noland Park, Brent, Devonshire.

Mr William Dorrell has left town for one of his residences in Sussex.

Mr T. A. Wallworth and his *cara sposa* are passing their holidays at Malvern.

Mrs E. A. Osgood has been visiting some friends at Garden City, Minnesota, U.S.

Bellini's monument at Catania is to be inaugurated in the early part of next month.

The, in her way, incomparable Théo lately fulfilled a short engagement at the Theatre, Spa.

The French Minister of Public Instruction has made Talazac, the tenor, "Officier d'Académie."

The *Nibelungen* performances at Brussels will probably be given in November at the Alhambra Theatre.

M. François Heugel, brother of M. J. L. Heugel, director of the *Ménestrel*, has died at Nantes, in his 69th year.

Mdles Victoria and Felicia de Bunsen have been invited by Lady Yardley to pass their vacation at Hardlow Park.

Luigi Mancinelli is in Florence. Having completed his march for the Arezzo Festival, he is now finishing his opera.

A concert was given not long since at Pampeluna by Sarasate, the violinist, and Gayarre, the operatic tenor (both Spaniards).

Schomburg, clarinet player in the Court Band, Sondershausen, has been created Chamber Virtuoso by the reigning Prince.

Ferdinand Strakosch opens his campaign at Barcelona with Ambrose Thomas's *Hamlet*, Bianca Donadio being the Ophelia.

The Señorita Doña Natividad Martinez has sung with much success in *Aida*, *Faust*, and *Ernani*, at the Theatre Royal, Athens.

The tenor Nouvelli has become a general favourite at the Teatro Nacional, Buenos-Ayres.—(Why did Mr Gye let him go?—Dr 31bgr.)

After leaving Bayreuth, Marie Brandt, the Kundry *par excellence*, will sing during September in Austria, and in October at the Theatre Royal, Munich.

A new tenor, Tobia Bertini, will make his *début* at the Teatro Apollo, Rome, during the Carnival season, singing first in *Le Prophète* and then in Mercadante's *Vestale*.

From Italy Emma Nevada has gone to Prague, where she has appeared with success in *La Sonnambula*. She was announced to sing also in *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, and *Mignon*.

The ballet of *Fedra*, with Sangalli in the leading part, is in rehearsal at St Petersburg, under the superintendence of Olivier Métra himself, who will conduct on the first night.

Miss Ella Lemmens, having been detained at Brussels, by the grave indisposition of her youngest sister (since dead), will be unable for some time to appear at the Covent Garden Concerts.

Mdme Damala (Sarah Bernhardt) has purchased for her son, who will be 18 in six months, the lease of the Ambigu Théâtre. She gives 85,000 fr., with 40,000 fr. as half a year's rent in advance, all stage properties being included, and the lease having five years to run. Mdme Damala is also said to be one of the proprietors of the Théâtre des Nations, where she will play in the winter of 1883, the Vaudeville having secured her services for next winter.—*Globe*.

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